pending in the Department of Tourism for a long time since 31st December, 2001; and

(e) the date by when these pending applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Interest subsidy of 3% is available on entire loan amount taken from designated financial institutions by 1—3 star approved hotel projects located outside the four metropolitan cities. Interest subsidy enhanced rate of 5% of admissible for such hotels if they are located in the identified travel circuit/destinations as well as Heritage hotels.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Forty two interest subsidy claims are pending.

(e) These pending cases are being examined expeditiously for appropriate decision.

Rules for trade agents, tour operators and guides

3221. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any rules for travel agents, tour operators and guides;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has formulated guidelines for granting recognition as approved Tour Operators, Travel Agents and for training of Guides.

(b) The Rules for recognition of Tour Operators, Travel Agents and Guidelines for training of Guides are placed at statement-I, II and III. (*See* below)

(c) Question does not arise.

Statement-I

Guidelines for recognition as approved Tour Operator w.e.f. 03.11.1997

1. The aims and objectives of the scheme for recognition shall be to promote tourism in India. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide tour operators.

2. *Definition:* A Tour Operator is one which makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sight seeing, entertainment and other tourism related services for tourists.

3. All applications for recognition shall be addressed to the Director General of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001.

4. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Tour Operator for grant of recognition by Department of Tourism:

   (i) The application for grant of recognition shall be in the prescribed form and submitted in duplicate.

   (ii) The Tour Operator should have a minimum paid up capital (or capital employed) of Rs. 2.00 lakhs duly supported by the latest audited balance sheet/Chartered Accountant's certificate.

   (iii) The turn-over in the terms of foreign exchange or Indian rupees by the firm from tour operation only should be a minimum of Rs. 10.00 lakhs duly supported by Chartered Accountant's certificate.

   (iv) The Tour Operator has an office under the charge of a full time member of their staff, who is adequately trained/ experienced in matters regarding transport, accommodation, currency, customs regulations and general information about travel and tourism related services. However, greater emphasis may be given to effective communication skills and knowledge of foreign language other than English.

   There should be a minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least two should have Diploma/Degree in Travel and Tourism from recognised university, IITTM or an institution approved by AICTE.

The Academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of exceptionally experienced personnel in airlines, Shipping, Transport, PR Agencies, Hotels and other corporate bodies and those who have 2 years experience with Department of Tourism approved tour operators.

(v) The Tour Operator should have been **in operation** for a **minimum period of two years before the date of application.**

(vi) The minimum office space should be of 250 sq.ft. besides the office may be located in neat and clean surroundings and equipped with telephone, fax and computer/computer reservation system etc. The office may be located preferably on Ground Floor or 1st. Floor, if situated in residential area with sufficient space for reception and easy access to toilets.

(vii) The Tour Operator will have to be income tax assessee and should have filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.

5. The recognition as Approved Tour Operator shall be granted for three years and renewal thereafter every five years on an application made by the tour operator along with fee.

6. The tour operator will be required to pay a **non-refundable** fee of Rs. 2000/- while applying for the recognition. The fee will be made payable to the Pay & Accounts Officer, Department of Tourism in the form of a Bank Draft. The fee for recognition of each Branch Office will be Rs. 1000/-. Fee for renewal will be Rs. 1000/- and Rs. 500/- for Head and Branch offices respectively.

7. Recognition will be granted to the Headquarter Office of Tour Operator. Branch offices will be approved alongwith the Headquarters Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch Offices are submitted to Department of Tourism and accepted by it.

8. The decision of the Government of India in the matter of

recognition shall be final. However, the Government of India may in their discretion refuse to recognise any firm or withdraw/ withhold at any time recognition already granted with the approval of the Competent Authority. Before such a decision is taken, necessary show cause notice would invariably be issued and the reply considered on merit. This will be done after careful consideration and generally as a last resort. Circumstances in which withdrawal is resorted would also be brought out.

9. Tour operator granted recognition shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by Government from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time by the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

10. Tour Operator should employ only Regional Guides trained and licenced by the Department of Tourism, Government of India and State level Guides approved by the State Governments.

Statement-II

Guidelines for recognition as approved travel agent w.e.f. 03.11.1997

1. The aims and objectives of the scheme for recognition shall be promote travel and tourism in India. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide travel agencies.

2. *Definition:* A Travel Agency is one which makes arrangements of tickets for travel by air, rail, ship, passport, visa, etc. It may also arrange accommodation, tours, entertainment and other tourism related services.

3. All applications for recognition shall be addressed to the Director General of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, No. 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001.

4. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Travel Agency for grant of recognition by Department of Tourism:—

(i) The application for grant of recognition shall be in the prescribed form and submitted in duplicate.

(ii) The Travel Agency has a minimum paid-up capital (or capital employed) of Rs. 5,00 lakhs duly supported by the audited balance sheet/Chartered Accountant's Certificate.

(iii)The Travel Agency should be approved by International Air Transport Association (IATA) or General Sales Agent (GSA) of an IATA member airlines.

(iv)The minimum office space should be 250 sq.ft. Besides, the office may be located in a neat and clean surrounding and equipped with telephone, fax and computer reservation system etc. The office may be located preferably on ground floor or 1st floor if situated in residential area with sufficient space for reception and easy access to toilet facilities.

(v) The Travel Agency should be under the charge of a full time member who is adequately trained, experienced in matters regarding ticketing, itineraries, transport, accommodation facilities, currency, customs regulations and travel and tourism related services. Besides this, greater emphasis may be given to effective communication skills, knowledge of foreign languages, other than English. **There should be minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least two should have Diploma/Degree in Travel and Tourism from recognised University, IITTM or Institutions approved by AICTE.**

The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of exceptionally experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport and PR Agencies, Hotel and other Corporate Bodies and those who have worked for 3 years with IATA/ UFTA Agencies.

(vi)The Travel Agency has been in operation for a period of one year after IATA approval at the time of filing the application.

The Travel Agency is an income-tax assessee and has filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.

5. Recognition as travel agency will be granted for 3 years and renewal thereafter for 5 years on an application made by Travel Agency alongwith fee.

6. The Travel Agency will be required to pay a **non-refundable fee of Rs. 2,000/-** while applying for the recognition. The fee will be payable to the Pay and Accounts Officer, Department of Tourism, in the form of a Bank Draft. Fee for recognition of each Branch Office will be Rs. 1,000/-. Fee for renewal will be Rs. 1,000/- and Rs. 500/- for Head and each Branch Office respectively.

7. Recognition will be granted to the Head Office of the Travel Agency. Branch Offices will be approved along with the Head Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch Offices are submitted to Department of Tourism and accepted by it.

8. The decision of the Government of India in the matter of recognition shall be final. However, the Government of India may in their discretion refuse to recognise any firm or withdraw/ withhold at any time recognition already granted with the approval of the competent authority. Before such a decision is taken, necessary Show Cause Notice would invariably be issued and the reply considered on merit. This will be done as a last resort and circumstances in which withdrawal is resorted would also be brought out.

9. The Travel Agency granted recognition shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by the Government from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time.

10. The travel Agency should employ only Regional Guides trained and licenced by the Department of Tourism, Government of India and State-level Guides approved by State Governments.

Statement-III

Revised Guidelines for Direct Selection of Guides Academic Qualifications, Screening procedure etc. effective from February 1996

The institution of guides is a very basic component of the infrastructural requirement both for international and domestic tourists. There has been a steady increase in the international tourist arrivals in the country and we have already crossed the 2 million mark in 1995. Further, as a result of increasing affluence, there is also a considerable increase in domestic tourist movement. In order to meet the increasing demand for guides both for international and domestic tourists, it has been decided to introduce a 3-tier system of guides so as to serve different market segments. These are as under:

(a) *Regional Guides:* To be trained by the Department of Tourism, Government of India through their Tourist Offices or by the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management or their Chapters or by the Indian Institutes of Hotel Management under the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

(b) *State-Level Guides:* To be trained by the State Governments. However, in specific cases wherever the State Governments deem it necessary, such courses could be organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

It is clarified that the Department of Tourism, Government of India will not train any State-level Guides unless the State Governments makes a written request in this regard. In such a case, the Department of Tourism will train the guides according to the curriculum prescribed for the State-level Guides.

(c) *Local Guides:* To be trained under the control of the State Governments/Local Administration. Their training programme, if any, will be decided by the respective State Governments at their discretion.

2. (a) After having determined the requirements of guides at various tourist centres in consultation with the travel trade, Department of Tourism, Government of India would organise training courses for the regional guides. The main emphasis for training these guides would not only be to cover touristic aspects of the States within the region but also impart fair knowledge of social political and economic policies etc. of the entire country as per the broad syllabus evolved by the Central Department of Tourism.

(b) The State Governments would also determine the requirement of State-level Guides in consultation with the travel industry. The training course for State-level Guides would be as per the syllabus.

(c) As regards Local Guides, the position regarding their training has been explained in para 11(c).

3. The guide training courses for the Regional Guides will be advertised in select media by the Department of Tourism, Government of India. Similarly, the State Governments would advertise the State-level Guides courses in the select media.

4. The following educational qualifications are prescribed for the direct selection of guides:

Regional-Level Guide:

(a) (i) *Minimum:* Graduate of a recognised University or three years diploma holder in Tourism from a recognised University/ Institute.

OR

(ii) A minimum qualification of 10+2 or equivalent certificate, with at least two years regular course in foreign language from a recognised University/approved Institution, well recognised Organisations, Embassies and their Cultural Centres etc. In case of any dispute about acceptance of such Institutions, the decision of the Department of Tourism, Government of India would be final.

(b) Fluency in English language is essential.

(c) ***Age limit***:

(i) The applicants shall be between the age of 20-30 years on the date of the first advertisement appearing in the media for selection of guides.

(ii) Age in the case of applicants with foreign language course as at (ii) above shall be between 20—50 years as on the date of first advertisement appearing in the media.

(iii) The upper age limit would be relaxable for SC/ST candidates, etc. for such number of years as are directed by Department of Tourism, Government of India from time to time through specific instructions.

State-Level Guides:

(a) (i) Minimum Graduate of a recognised University or three years diploma holder in Tourism from a recognised University/Institute.

OR

(ii) A minimum qualification of 10+2 or equivalent certificate, with at least six months regular course in foreign language from a recognised University/approved Institution, well recognised Organisation, Embassies and their Cultural Centres etc. In case of any dispute about acceptance of such Institutions the decision of the Director of the respective State Department of Tourism would be final.

(b) Fluency in English language is essential.

(c) ***Age limit***:

(i) The applicants shall be between the age of 20—40 years on the date of the first advertisement appearing in the media for recruitment of guides.

(ii) Age in the case of applicants with foreign language courses shall be between 20—50 years as indicated above.

(iii) The upper age limit would be relaxable for SC/ST

candidates, etc. for such number of years as are determined by the respective State Governments.

Local Guide:

(a) Minimum High School or equivalent certificate.

(b) Age limit shall be between 20—40 years.

(c) The upper age limit would be relaxable for SC/ST candidates, etc. for such number of years as are determined by the respective State Governments.

5. (a) *Regional-Level Guide:* A Screening Committee consisting of representatives of the Regional Government of India Tourist Office, Director Tourism of the State or his representative and representatives from Hotel & Travel Industry will be set up in order to screen the applications. All applicants who fulfil the qualifications shall appear in a written test which will be confined primarily to the following subject:

(i)	Knowledge of monuments around the area	50 marks
(ii)	Questions on History	50 marks
(iii)	General Knowledge	100 marks

(b) *State-Level Guides:* The State Government will also set up a Screening Committee with representatives from the Tourism Department, the Hotel and Travel Industry and Government of India Tourist Office and would follow similar procedure for selection/ training of guides as indicated in para 5(a) above.

6. The required number of candidates in order of their scoring at least a minimum of 40 per cent marks in written test will be selected for interview. However, the Screening Committees both for the Regional/State Level Guides would restrict the number of candidates

to three times the total number of vacancies subject to availability of eligible/successful candidates, so as to ensure a wider selection. The Interview Committees would comprise the following:

(a) *Regional-Level Guides:*

(i) Regional Director, Government of India Tourist Office or his representative.
(ii) Director of Tourism of the State Government or his representative.
(iii) A representative from the Archaeological Survey of India.
(iv) A representative each of Travel Agents Association of India/IATO wherever possible or from the local trade.
(v) A Professor from the local University.

It may be mentioned that the minimum quorum of the Interview Committee shall be four representatives. However, this list of four must include the Regional Director, Government of India Tourist Office or his representative.

(b) *State-Level Guides:*

(i) Director, Department of Tourism of the State Government or his representative.
(ii) A representative from the Government of India Tourist Office.
(iii) A representative from the State Archaeological Department.
(iv) A representative each of Travel Agents Association of India/IATO wherever possible or from the local trade.
(v) A Professor from the local University.

The minimum quorum of the Interview Committee shall be four representatives. However, this list of four must include the Director of Tourism of the State Government or his representative.

The Committee will select the exact number of candidates required for training of guides both at Regional-level and State-level Guides. The selection shall be strictly on merit based on the combined marks obtained in the written test and interview. However, a waiting list of upto 20 per cent of the total number of vacancies may be maintained.

This waiting list will be used to the extent that actual vacancies get generated through non-joining or quitting the relevant course at an early stage. (It is clarified that the waiting list shall be valid for the relevant Guide Training Course only and shall not be used for selection of guides for future courses. This will be applicable for both Regional and State-level Guides).

8. *For both Regional/State-Level Guide Training Courses*

Once a candidate is selected for the training, it will be the responsibility of the training authorities to equip him/her with all kinds of knowledge as per the syllabus laid down by the Tourism Department, Government of India.

On completion of the training course, a written examination of 100 marks would be held consisting of the entire syllabus covered during the course where it would be necessary for the guide-trainee to secure minimum 40 per cent marks to enable him to become eligible for receiving a Guide Identity Card.

Supplementary examination would be arranged within a period of 6 months for such failed candidates to give them an opportunity to reappear. However, it would not be necessary for them to attend the Guide Training Course again. Failure on the second attempt would debar the candidate from re-appearing in future and would thus deny him the opportunity of receiving the Guide Identity Card.

A minimum of 80 per cent attendance would be essential before taking the final examination. However, relaxation upto 5 per cent can be given by the Regional Director, Government of India Tourist Office/State Director of Tourism in case of Regional/State-level respectively as the case may be in genuine cases of sickness, specific family circumstances or otherwise merited reasons.

9.(a) A trained guide will be given an Identity Card valid for a period of one year by the Government of India Tourist Office for Regional Guides. These would be renewed on a yearly basis and would be subject to their performance and other conditions till they retire after attaining the age of 65 years.

(b) Similar procedure for issue of Identity Cards to the State level trained guides/local guides will be followed by the State Government.

10.(a) Persons holding regular/part-time employment will be considered for the Guide Training Course both for the Regional-level Guides and State-level Guides.

(b) The concept of Local Guides is primarily being conceived for such cities as are far away from well established destinations or less frequented tourist destination spots where it may be difficult for the tour operators etc. to send guides with the groups/FITs. This level of Local Guide is conceived to serve as a source of creating employment opportunities in comparatively remote areas. As such, these guides may work as part time or whole time.

11.(a) For Regional-level Guides, Guide Training Courses will be for a period of 12 weeks. Eminent Lecturers/Professors will be engaged or requisitioned to give talks on the subjects as listed in the syllabus.

(b) For State-level Guides the Guide Training Course will be for a period of nine weeks.

(c) For Local Guides, it is recommended that the State Governments may consider the possibility of organising a minimum/training programme of one week to two weeks for giving exposure on the basic fundamentals of guide job content, travel and tourism policies etc. Whenever the State Governments seek advice from the Department of Tourism, Government of India on how to structure the training course for Local Guides, the Department would extend its expertise in assisting the State Government.

12. *Practical Training*

(a) *Regional-Level Guides:*

Special emphasis will be laid on practical training as well as visits to important landmarks places of interest etc. in the region.

(b) *State-Level Guides:*

Special emphasis will be laid on the practical training as well as visits to important landmarks, places of interest etc. within the State. They may also be apprised of the tourism policy of the State.

(c) *Local Guides:*

State Government/Local Administration may devise suitable practical training, if necessary.

13. During the training course frequent group discussions shall be organised.

14.(a) The Regional Guides on successful completion of their training course would get themselves enlisted with the respective Regional Government of India Tourist Office which would enable them to get their Identity Card endorsed from the ASI. Similarly the State-Level Guides, on successful completion of their training course would get themselves registered with the Director of Tourism of the respective State and then the relevant Identity Card would be endorsed by the Department of Tourism, Government of India /ASI.

(b) Identity Cards of State-Level Guides would be endorsed by the respective State Archaeological Departments etc. State Governments would also be requested to extend similar endorsement on the Identity Cards of the Regional-level Guides for the coverage of the State monuments etc. under their control.

(c) The Local-level Guides will have no authority to conduct visitors to the monuments controlled by ASI. As regards State-controlled monuments, it is for the respective State Departments of Tourism or the Archaeological Departments to take a decision on permitting them to conduct tourists to such monuments.

15. Regional Guides will be required to observe rules and regulations as prescribed by the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

The State-level Guides/Local Guides will be required to observe rules and regulations as prescribed by the Director of Tourism of the respective State. The State Governments are required to prescribe rules and regulations with necessary modifications, if any.

16.(a) Those Regional Guides who violate the conditions will be de-recognised by the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

(b) The State Governments would be charged with the

responsibility of derecognising the State-level guides who violate the conditions.

(c) State Government/Local Administration may also follow similar procedure relating to local guides.

17.(a) The applicants/selected candidates will be required to pay examination fee/training fee. To be decided by the concerned Regional Director, Govt. of India Tourist Office for admission to the Regional Guide Training Courses. The fees thus collected will be non-refundable.

(b) Similar procedure may be followed by the State Governments for the State-level guides/local guides.

18. The cost of Identity Card/Licence shall be met out of the fees to be paid by the selected candidates for joining the Guide Training Course.

19.(a) The fees for annual renewal of the Identity Cards/Licence in respect of regional guides may be determined by the Regional Director, Govt. of India Tourist office, if necessary.

(b) The State Govts. may also follow similar procedure for State Guides/Local guides.

20. The regional/State-level guides who are enlisted with Govt. of India Tourist Office will report and change of address to the concerned Regional Director/Directors/Managers of Govt. of India Tourist Office within 30 days failing which his/her Identity Card/Licence will be liable to cancellation. The State-level guides/local guides shall also report such changes to the concerned State Tourism Department.

21.(a) The fees to be charged by the Regional Guides will be fixed by the Department of Tourism, Government of India in consultation with the travel trade.

(b) The fees to be charged by the State-level guides may be fixed by the respective State Governments in consultation with the travel trade.

(c) The fees to be charged by the local guide would be determined

by the local administration on the directions of the State Government.

22. Under the 3-tier system of guides, the Identity Cards would be issued as per the following colour scheme:

(i)	Regional guides	Red colour
(ii)	State guides	Yellow colour
(iii)	Local guides	Light Green colour

23. The areas of jurisdiction of the Regional-level guides would be as under:—

1. Northern Region
2. Southern Region
3. Western Region
4. Eastern Region
5. North-Eastern Region

[Sub-region under the charge of Regional Director (East).]

The jurisdiction of each region mentioned above would consist of the States/Union Territories which are covered by the respective Regional Office of the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

24. The Department of Tourism, Government of India reserves the right to issue clarifications, modify or amend the guidelines without assigning any reasons from time to time.